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Minutes for September 25, 2007
Budget and Faculty Welfare Committee

Attending:

Jeanette Norton, Chair (08) Agriculture
Steve Harris (09) Vice Chair, Libraries
Jim Bame (08) Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences
Charles Salzberg (09) Education and Human Services
Daren Cornforth (09) Senate
James Sanders (10) Senate

1. Review of August 2007 minutes, changes noted, approved.

2. Programs for review this month

Bachelors in Interior Design received 9/20/07.

This is basically a rearrangement of emphases into a degree using existing courses and resources. It is not expected to have significant budgetary or faculty welfare issues. No library review was sought for the program. Question was raised about who has oversight to insist on inclusion of this kind of information in any proposal (as described in R401 template). Since this is a reorganization of an existing program, no additional burden would be placed on the Library.

3. Evaluation process for teaching role of faculty

Consideration of whether teaching evaluation should be discussed at Faculty Forum on November 5. A number of questions raised:

- Should colleges be developing their own processes for evaluation? Perhaps the Provost should be queried about this.
- Should or will more documentation of teaching be required?
- How much effort can faculty afford to invest in evaluation?
- How can the load of evaluation be spread to avoid overloading faculty and departments?
- Is there of danger of evaluation being used to violate academic freedom, by altering the content of courses or inhibiting new courses and teaching methods?
- Are the evaluation models we are asked to employ coming from K-12? Are these methods applicable to higher education?

4. Conflict of interest policy review

At the September FS meeting the BFW was charged to review the conflict of interest policy, what applies to departments versus individuals, especially for its implications for textbook choices (i.e. Is it a conflict of interest to require a textbook that you financially benefit from sales?). Relevant Policies 307, 327. Discussion:

1. USU waives its claim in the case of scholarly works. This includes textbooks.
2. Who established the \$500 limit on royalties obtained from works used in class?
3. Is there a violation of academic freedom if the assignment of textbooks is regulated?

4. Textbook publishers may exert significant influence over textbook adoption by offering various incentives. Are these incentives included in \$500 limit?
5. Problem resolution generally resides within the department, why and when is this not functioning properly?

The committee recommends these actions

1. Review of any substantive changes to policy by the entire faculty through faculty senate.
2. The \$500 threshold should be added to the first level of the “Conflict of Interest Assurance Compliance” Form I. [Screening Question #4]
3. \$500 threshold should be a screening device indicating to department heads and administrators that the choice of textbook should be reviewed for its appropriateness, this is not a set limit to royalty or proceeds.
4. A management plan for conflicts should be developed by the instructor and her or his supervisor, director, or department head. The current management plan form includes the statement:

IV. Textbooks and Course Material

Describe a plan where royalties or sales proceeds in excess of \$500 annually will be returned to students or directed to a fund that is not in your control (such as a scholarship fund, etc.).

BFW felt that this is one option for a management plan for this COI but this specific dollar amount limit has not been set as official USU policy (see action #1 above). If administration feels that this should be a limit rather than a suggestion then it should become policy through regular faculty senate procedures.

5. New business items

Budgetary Review: Suggested date to meet with administration: November 27. Committee annual report due in February.

Issues for Faculty Forum:

- Proposal for all new buildings be planned and designed with the goal of achieving LEED certification. Commend the President for signing the university climate statement. [??]
- Impact of regional campus hiring on departments.
- 3.85% budget recycling: what is the prognosis for its continuance?